

curvature in the vehicle's roof. Each magnet assembly 126 is coated with a scratch-resisting plastic material which is chosen to prevent both scratching of the vehicle's metallic surface and exposure of the metallic stand-off housing 134 (described below). A suitable scratch-resistant coating material is Plascoat PPA 571 manufactured by Plastronics, Inc. A screw hole 127 in the coated magnet assembly 126 is recessed so that the head of screw 128 will not contact the roof of the vehicle.

Magnet assembly 126 preferably comprises a coated metal housing 134 with lip 136, which extends slightly beyond a corresponding magnet 138 to permit easier removal of advertising member 102 from the vehicle roof; that is, to define a space between the coated face of the magnet 138 and the roof, so that the force of the magnet may more easily be decoupled from the metal of the roof. As noted by the dotted lines in FIG. 1A, the magnet assembly 126 extends slightly below the bottom level of the foot 110.

Base 107, shown in FIG. 2, contains holes 115 for three fasteners 116 for supporting the illuminating lamp assembly 140 shown by dotted lines in FIG. 1 and which is accessible through removable plate 118 (FIG. 2). This removable plate 118 is affixed into a recessed well 119 in base 107 by four fasteners 120, and also contains a notch 122 through which the electrical cord 124 for the lamp assembly 140 is extended.

Again noting FIG. 1, the illuminating lamp assembly 140 comprise a plurality of light bulbs 142 removably affixed in braces 144, which are attached to base 107 via fasteners 116. Electrical continuity is attained via electrical cord 124 coupled via plug 146, which is removably engaged into a conventional automobile lighter.

The advertising sign 10 is removably affixed to a metallic vehicle roof 180 in such a way that the advertising sign may be read from all directions, as shown in FIG. 3. This is accomplished by placing the long axis of advertising sign 10 on the roof 180 parallel to the windshield of the vehicle. In this configuration, the slight curvature of the forward-facing side 106 substantially reduces wind resistance, and thus, the likelihood that the sign 10 will be blown from the automobile at elevated speeds. The dimension of the feet 110 insures that the curvature of the roof does not prevent the magnets from engaging the roof 180. Alternately, the sign 10 may be placed longitudinally along the roof 180.

Apparatus for holding the advertising signs 110 in accordance with the present invention is shown in FIGS. 4-6 and is referred to generally by the reference numeral 20. This first embodiment of a storage apparatus comprises a rigid cylinder 202, the diameter of which is slightly greater than the length of two sides 106 of sign 10. The cylinder 202 has three substantially coplanar flat support members 204 sufficiently wide to support in a stable manner an advertising sign extending diagonally across the cylinder 202, and three substantially coplanar spacing members 206 sufficiently thin to fit between two contiguously placed advertising signs extending across the cylinder 202 and spaced from the support members 204. The support and spacing members 204, 206 are substantially equally spaced radially and pass through the axis 208 of the cylinder 202 in a radially offset fashion so that an advertising sign 10 placed between two spacing members 206 rests on one support member 204. In this embodiment six advertising signs 10 with their bases 107 pointing outward will fit into one holding apparatus 20 (see FIG. 5).

A plurality of combinations of cylinders and signs 10 as described in the preceding paragraph may be stacked as

shown in FIG. 6, whereby a first cylinder 202 is filled with advertising signs 10 and then another cylinder 302 is placed atop the advertising members 10 in the first cylinder 202. This second cylinder 302 may then also be filled with advertising members 10.

A second embodiment of storage apparatus in accordance with the present invention is shown in FIG. 7. In this arrangement, an elongated bar 70 of a ferrous metal is supported by fasteners 702 to a wall or similar vertical structure. The advertising members 10 are then stored along the bar by attaching one pair of magnet assemblies 126 to the bar 70. While a single advertising member 10 is shown attached to the bar 70 in FIG. 7, it will be appreciated that the bar 70 is dimensioned to accept a plurality of the advertising members 10 and that additional ferrous metal bars 70 may be also affixed to the same vertical support for storing additional advertising members.

It will be understood by those skilled in the art that the advertising member 10 of the present invention and its associated storing arrangements provide numerous advantages and improvement with respect to the prior art. For example, the unitary, enclosed construction of the sign member 10 and the curvature of the elongated signs 106 provide a large message area, while significantly reducing wind resistance relative to prior art sign structures of a similar configuration. The integral, enclosed nature of the base 107 also contributes to the reduction of wind drag, while protecting the illuminating lamp assembly of 140 from moisture. The corner feet 110 further contribute to a reduction in wind drag, being integrally molded with the remainder of the body, while insuring that the advertising member 10 is capable of being supported upon the roof of vehicles having a wide range of curvature across the roof. The particular construction of the magnet assembly 126, and the particular manner in which it is supported in the corresponding one of the feet 110 permits the advertising member 10 to be easily attached to and removed from a roof of a vehicle, again while insuring that the member 10 remains firmly attached to the roof of the vehicle during use. The particular selection of scratch-resistant coating 134 on the magnet assembly 126 protects both the magnet assembly and the vehicle roof during use.

This concludes the description of the preferred embodiments. A reading by those skilled in the art will bring to mind various changes without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. It is intended, however, that the invention only be limited by the following appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. An advertising sign for removably mounting onto a metal panel of a motor vehicle, comprising:

an advertising member having a base, ends and sides formed together into a completely enclosed hollow body, the base including plural magnet receptacles with a magnet fastened in each receptacle;

each said magnet comprising a dish-shaped housing with a magnetic member within each housing, the housing having an edge extending below the magnetic member; and

means for pivotally attaching each magnet to the base so that each magnet can pivot and adjust to differences in slope along a vehicle metal panel to which the advertising sign may be attached.

2. An advertising sign for removably mounting onto a metal panel of a motor vehicle, comprising:

an advertising member having a base, ends and sides formed together into a completely enclosed hollow body;

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